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Attention: news desk / defence correspondent ***one sheet***

SEEDS OF HOPE - EAST TIMOR PLOUGHSHARES

WOMEN DISARMING FOR LIFE AND JUSTICE

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29 January 1996 - For immediate release

WOMEN DISARM HAWK JET WITH HAMMERS

Three women were arrested at the British Aerospace military site at Warton, Lancashire in the early hours this morning after disarming a Hawk Jet (jet number ZH 966) with household hammers. The women, Lotta Kronlid, Joanna Wilson and Andrea Needham, phoned from inside the South Hanger to say that they had completed a Ploughshares Action - to disarm Hawk ground-attack aircraft destined for Indonesia, which was to be used to continue Indonesia's genocide against the people of East Timor. This is the 56th Ploughshares action worldwide and the 3rd in Britain. Inspired by the biblical injunction "to beat swords into ploughshares", these are nonviolent acts of disarmament in which the activists take full responsibility for their actions.

British Aerospace are due to deliver 24 Hawk jets to Indonesia during 1996. Lotta Kronlid, a gardener from Oxford, said, "There is substantial evidence that Hawks from previous deals have been used by the Indonesian military to bomb civilians in neighbouring East Timor. Indonesia has illegally occupied East Timor for over twenty years - in defiance of ten UN resolutions - and has been responsible for the deaths of 200,000 people, approximately one-third of the pre-invasion population."

For three years, many local and national groups and individuals have been calling on both British Aerospace and the British government to cancel the Hawk deal. The Warton site - where the Hawks are assembled and tested - has been the focus of regular protest. Joanna Wilson, who is a borough councillor in Kirkby, Merseyside, said, "Despite a sustained campaign, the British government and British Aerospace have refused to stop the sale. These planes will very soon be killing people in East Timor unless action is taken immediately to stop them."

Andrea Needham, a nurse and peace activist also from Kirkby, said, "I pray that what we do today in disarming these planes will be a small ray of hope for our sisters and brothers struggling for peace and justice in East Timor."

Angie Zelter, an environmental campaigner from Norfolk, is part of the group but has not yet carried out her part of the action: "Ploughshares actions seek to empower others to believe in their ability to disarm weapons and be publicly accountable for their actions. In keeping with this spirit I will carry out my act of disarmament soon and hope that others will continue this work". (Until midday, phone: 01263 512 049)

For further information: Phone: 0171-249 6949 , and fax / phone: 0171-923 9511

The Seeds of Hope - East Timor Ploughshares group has prepared a broadcast quality video, taped interviews and a report about the action, which are available to the press. Personal statements and photos are also available.